

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MONDAY 11th MAY 2020

LAPA – The new Leeds City Region Alternative Provision Association

A new committee to help local schools plan for post COVID-19 recovery phase for most vulnerable children across Leeds and surrounding region.

The Leeds City Region Alternative Provision Association (LAPA) has been created to support vulnerable children across Leeds and neighbouring local authorities. They will look at how best to approach the return of the most vulnerable and high-need children, including those with social, emotional and mental health challenges, to their schools during the COVID-19 recovery.

Realising that schools may need more support during the recovery, the group came together to form LAPA to share their expertise in supporting vulnerable children.

LAPA includes representatives from the local authority, special schools, alternative provisions, social care and educational psychologists from across the local region. It also includes experts in child psychiatry, teenage brain development, child and mental health.

Speaking after his election as Chair of LAPA, Lee Garner, Associate Assistant Principal - Strategic Leader for Alternative Provision at the Leeds based White Rose Academies Trust, said “The impact of school closures on vulnerable children, particularly those with mental health challenges or special educational needs, is increasingly apparent.

“We need to focus on the next steps and how we intend to approach the return of those vulnerable children across the region back into school, when that time comes.

“We’ve created this working group so that all schools and education settings are supported and are able to determine what works best for them in terms of reintegration, as we know that everyone has different needs and requirements. We’re looking at drawing on the expertise of all members of the group and creating helpful guidance for all schools across the region.

Jo Pittard, an Executive Principal overseeing two alternative provision academies (Elland Alternative Provision Academy and St Wilfrid’s Alternative Provision Academy) in Yorkshire and Vice Chair of LAPA, said “It’s vital that our group first gather the advice of professionals in the field of child psychology, and experts working with young people who have experienced significant trauma and adverse experiences, and build this into our educational response and planning. Ultimately it’s about the children and making sure they are properly protected and cared for throughout the process.”

LAPA are currently working on a report to set out their recommendations to offer guidance to local schools to mitigate the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic when the time comes to reintegrate them back into full time education.

The group is not intending to create policy but provide support and guidance with the hopes that this will be implemented by both mainstream schools and alternative provisions.

Moving forward, LAPA hopes to become a supportive steering group for alternative provisions by sharing expertise and best practice in order to raise the profile and standards across the region.

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Notes to the Editor

Leeds City Region Alternative Provision Association (LAPA) has 20+ members drawn from social care, specialist education, alternative provision and local authority departments.

LAPA includes members from across the Leeds city region and neighbouring authorities, Kirklees, Calderdale and Doncaster

Members include:

Lee Garner (Chair): Associate Assistant Principal - Strategic Leader for Alternative Provision, White Rose Academies Trust (Leeds City Academy, Leeds East Academy, Leeds West Academy)

Jo Pittard (Vice Chair): Associate Executive Principal, Delta Academies Trust

Mark Randall: Inclusion Director, Calderdale Local Authority

Andrew Kitterick: Executive Headteacher, The Pivot Academy

Paul Sutcliffe: Specialist Social Worker, Pivot Care & Education Consultancy

Kathryn Parkinson: Educational Psychologist, Parkinson Consultancy Services

Dirk Pittard: Principal (KS2-4), St Wilfrid's Alternative Provision Academy

Dave Roberts: Assistant Principal, Springwell East Academy

Callum Wetherill: Specialist Leader of Education (SEND), Joseph Norton Alternative Provision Academy (KS2)

Jane Brooksbank: Director of Area Inclusion Partnership, East AIP

Kelly Newby: Head of SEMH School, Southway, The Rodillian Multi Academy Trust

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